

# GENESIS

THE PATRIARCHS  
ABRAHAM



CHAPTERS 12-20

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# GENESIS

THE PATRIARCHS  
ABRAHAM

CHAPTERS 12 - 20

# Letter to the Church

Dear Church Family,

We now enter a transitional part of the book of Genesis. While Genesis 1-11 focused on God's perfect Creation devolving into chaos due to the introduction of sin into the world, and the repetitive downward spiral of humanity's rebellion against God, Genesis 12 demonstrates God's intervention to continue to fulfill His Genesis 3:15 promise of a coming Redeemer who would crush the head of the serpent.

Genesis 12:1-3 is the key that unlocks an understanding of the Scriptures. Genesis 12-50 provides us the story of the Patriarchs, the family that God has called to be the seed through which Messiah would come. In the weeks ahead, we will investigate the call of God on Abram (whose name would eventually be changed to Abraham), the 'father of many nations', along with his wife Sarah, a woman who had to be strong throughout the journey that God had for them. God will enter into a covenant with Abraham, promising to bless all the nations of the earth through his line, setting the foundation for God's plan of salvation for all mankind. As we will see throughout this journey, Abraham's family was far from perfect. Yet through their struggles we will see the grace and mercy of God, themes of faith and obedience, and the fulfillment of God's promises even when it would look like the odds were stacked heavily against it.

Throughout this part of our journey, may I invite you, if you haven't already, to respond to the calling that God has for your life? We must remember that Abraham was called to leave the comfort and security of what he had known to enter into something riskier and bigger than he could ever have imagined. We must remember that he and Sarah were ordinary people called by God to accomplish an extraordinary task fitted for them. Never forget that when a man or woman of God responds to His call and steps into His will, He will equip and guide them in accomplishing that purpose until He sees it finished.

In His Grip,  
Bryan Tema

Abraham was called to  
leave the comfort  
and security of what  
he had known to enter into  
something riskier and bigger  
than he could ever  
have imagined.

# RESOURCES FOR GROWTH

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For this guide, we are providing an array of resources. The different subjects in Genesis often have different interpretations, and, although some of these issues are not salvific, we can often be divided. Jesus calls His church to be unified and to love each other - even in the midst of ideas that might be divisive.

Note that for many of these resources, we are not planting a theological flag in the sand. We want to provide differing perspectives and encourage you to do the heart work of understanding the issues at play in interpreting Genesis. To that end, some of these resources will not be “gracespring’s position” on issues, but are suggested to allow for you to engage with different thoughts and pray about how God is calling you to interpret scripture.

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**RightNow Media:**

*Genesis*  
by Charlie Dates

*The Book of Genesis*  
by Joshua Grauman

*Navigating Genesis*  
by Hugh Ross

*Abraham:  
Eyewitness to the  
Promise*  
by Mindy Ferguson

*Jesus in All of Genesis*  
by David Bowden

*The Bible Project -  
Genesis*

**Books:**

*The New Answers  
to Genesis*  
by Ken Ham

*Living in the Gap  
Between Promise  
and Reality*  
by Iain Duguid

*The Unseen Realm*  
by Dr. Michael Heiser

*The Root of the  
Righteous*  
by A.W. Tozer

*Uncommon Ground*  
by Timothy Keller  
and John Inazu

*God's Kingdom  
Through God's  
Covenants*  
by Peter J. Gentry  
and Stephen J.  
Wellum

**Podcasts:**

*The Bible Project*

*Genesis Marks the  
Spot*  
by Carey Griffel

*The Naked Bible  
Podcast*  
by Dr. Michael  
Heiser

*Exploring My  
Strange Bible*  
by Tim Mackey

*Answers in Genesis  
Podcast*

**Websites/Apps:**

YouVersion

ReadScripture

Verses

BlueLetterBible

StepBible

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WEEK ONE

# The Call of God

Through this portion of our growth guide, we will be walking through Genesis 12-20 and looking largely at the life of Abraham. In this opening week, we are focusing specifically on the call of Abram to follow God from a place of familiarity to a place of God's promise. We will find that embracing God's calling always involves a risk. Take a moment to read Genesis 12:1-3:

*“Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”*

The calling on our lives might not seem as dramatic as Abram's - to leave his country and family and follow God to an unknown place. For many of us, the calling looks like following God into obedience in the way that we approach family and career. God's call on our life often leads to risk because we don't always know what the end point will be, we just know that He is faithful and will guide us. When our eyes are fixed on Him, we won't miss the steps we're supposed to take.

HEAVENLY FATHER,

HELP ME TO DISCERN AND EMBRACE YOUR CALLING. HELP ME TO CRUCIFY MY FLESH TO ENCOUNTER YOU. I PRAY THAT YOU WOULD MAKE CLEAR THE PATH THAT I AM TO TAKE AND THAT YOUR LIGHT AND LIFE WOULD ENCAPSULATE ALL THAT I AM SO THAT I CAN BE A VESSEL OF YOUR RESTORATION AND REDEMPTION TO THE WORLD AROUND ME. MAY THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH AND THE MEDITATIONS OF MY HEART BE PLEASING TO YOU AND ENCOURAGING TO OTHERS. HELP ME TO WALK IN YOUR CALLING DAY IN AND DAY OUT AND FIND MYSELF APPROVED BY YOU AS I STEP INTO FULL MATURITY.

AMEN.



## Questions to Consider:

Have you taken the time to consider God's call on your life?

If you have, have you sensed what that calling is? What is it?

If you haven't, what steps might you take to seek God for what He's calling you to do?

What are the risks and challenges in stepping forward into the calling of God?

What will you do next with this information?

# A MAP OF THE REGION



# Significant Events in the Life of Abraham

UR TO HARAN - *Abram's family leaves Ur and settles in Haran (Genesis 11:31-32)*

HARAN TO CANAAN - *God calls Abram to leave Haran and continue to Canaan (Genesis 12:1-5)*

SHECHEM - *The Lord makes a covenant promise to Abram (Genesis 12:6-7)*

BETHEL - *Abram settles near Bethel (Genesis 12:8)*

NEGEV - *Abram journeys in stages to the Negev desert region (Genesis 12:9)*

EGYPT - *Abram journeys to Egypt due to famine (Genesis 12:10-20)*

BETHEL - *Abram passes through the Negev and resettles in Bethel (Genesis 13:1-4)*

SODOM - *Lot settles in Sodom (Genesis 13:10-13)*

HEBRON - *Abram moves to Hebron near the oaks of Mamre (Genesis 13:18)*

SALEM - *Melchizedek blesses Abram in Salem (Genesis 14:17-19)*

HEBRON - *God establishes the Abrahamic covenant and covenant circumcision and changes Abram's name (Genesis 15,17)*

SODOM & GOMORRAH - *Both cities are destroyed (Genesis 19:1-29)*

NEGEV - *Abraham travels the Negev and settles between Kadesh and Shur; King Abimelech of Gerar takes Sarah (Genesis 20)*



# Abram's Imperfection

Immediately after Abram received God's calling, He followed in obedience, taking His family to the land of Canaan. God promised Abram at that moment that He would give the land to him and his descendants.

"THEN THE LORD APPEARED TO ABRAM AND SAID, "TO YOUR OFFSPRING I WILL GIVE THIS LAND." SO HE BUILT THERE AN ALTAR TO THE LORD, WHO HAD APPEARED TO HIM. FROM THERE HE MOVED TO THE HILL COUNTRY ON THE EAST OF BETHEL AND PITCHED HIS TENT, WITH BETHEL ON THE WEST AND AI ON THE EAST. AND THERE HE BUILT AN ALTAR TO THE LORD AND CALLED UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD." GENESIS 12:7-8

Then we see an interesting turn of events. When a famine hits the land, Abram and his family head to Egypt. In Egypt, Abram makes the choice to deceive Pharaoh by claiming that Sarai is his sister instead of his wife. This leads to great calamity for both Abram and for the Egyptians.

This deception is a great reminder that even when we're called, we can still fall short of the best that God has for us. The beauty of these reminders is that our failures are never fatal in our relationship with God. He is still holding all things together and He still calls us beloved sons and daughters - even when we set out in ways that go against His will for our lives. He is a gracious Father who always restores and always takes us back in. We'll spend some time this week looking at this passage of scripture and digging deeper into the story of Abram and Sarai.

## A Prayer...

FATHER,

I CONFESS THAT I AM IMPERFECT AND YOU ARE PERFECT. IN YOUR HOLINESS AND LOVE, YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PURSUE MY HEART AND CALL ME A SON OR DAUGHTER. IN YOUR KINDNESS, YOU HAVE GIVEN ME A NEW LIFE AND A NEW PURPOSE. AS I HAVE WALKED WITH YOU, I HAVE OFTEN STUMBLERD OR WALKED IN MY OWN DIRECTION, THINKING THAT I KNOW BEST. I ASK FOR YOUR FORGIVENESS FOR THE THOUGHTS OF MY MIND, THE WORKS OF MY HANDS, AND THE STEPS THAT I HAVE TAKEN THAT ARE OPPOSITE OF YOUR DESIRE FOR ME. I PRAY THAT YOU FORGIVE MY SINS AND HELP ME TO SEE YOU AS THE GIVER OF NEW LIFE. REMIND ME THAT MY FAILURES ARE NEVER FINAL, BUT YOU ARE HOLDING MY HEART AND MIND AND CALLING ME BACK TO YOU.

AMEN.

## Digging into God's Word

*Take time this week to study Genesis 12:4-20 by using the following method:*

**WRITE** - Pick one verse that stands out to you from today's passage. Write that verse out in your prayer journal. Read over this verse several times and pray for God to illuminate its meaning.

**OBSERVE** - Try to answer the Who, What, When, Where, and Why questions about this passage. Who wrote it, What is it about, When was it written, Where did it take place, and Why did they include this passage in scripture? What do these observations teach you about God?

**RELEVANCE** - How is this passage relevant to your life today? In what ways is it applicable and how can you immediately put to use what you're learning through reading?

**DECLARE** - Write out any promises that you've gleaned from these portions of scripture, whether explicitly stated or inferred. Declare these promises over your life in prayer. Ask God for His will and His timing in these promises.

## Nights & Days of Doubt

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I would that my heart was ever strong, O Lord,  
my faith always firm and unwavering,  
my thoughts unclouded,  
my devotion sincere,  
my vision clear.

I would that I dwelt always in that state  
wherein my belief, my hope, my confidence,  
were rooted and certain.

I would that I could remain in those seasons  
when assailing storms seem only  
to make faith stronger, proving your presence,  
your providence.

But it is not always so.  
There are those other moments,  
as now,

when I cannot sense you near,  
cannot hear you, see you, touch you—times  
when fear or depression or frustration  
overwhelm,  
and I find no help or consolation,  
when the seawalls of my faith crumble  
and give way to intruding tides of doubt.

Have I believed in vain?  
Are your words true?  
They seem so distant to me now.  
Is your presence real?  
I cannot feel it.  
Do you love me?  
Or are you indifferent to my grief?  
Under weight of such darkness,  
how can I remember the sunlight of your love  
as anything more than a child's dream?

Under weight of such doubt,  
how can I still proclaim to my own heart  
with certainty that you are real?  
And so, Jesus, I do now the only thing  
I know to do.  
Here I drag my heavy heart again  
into this cleared and desolate space,  
to see if you will meet me in my place of doubt,

even as you mercifully met your servant  
Thomas in his uncertainty, even as you once  
acted in compassionate response to  
a fearful father who desperately pleaded:

*I believe, Lord. Help me with my unbelief!*

For where else but to you might I flee  
with my doubts? You alone have the  
words of eternal life.

A LONG SILENCE IS KEPT.

This I know to be true, my Lord and my God:  
You are not in the least angered  
by my doubts and my questions,  
for they have often been the very things  
that lead me to press closer in to you,  
seeking the comfort of your presence,  
seeking to understand the roots of  
my own confusion.  
So also use these present doubts  
for your purposes, O Lord.  
I offer them to you.  
Even as the patriarch Job  
made of his pain and confusion a petition;  
even as the psalmists again and again  
carried their cries, their questions, their laments  
to you; so would I be driven by my doubts  
to despair of my own strength and knowledge  
and righteousness and control,  
and instead to seek your face, knowing that



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when I plead for proof,  
what I most need is your presence.

In your presence I can offer my questions,  
knowing you are never  
threatened by my uncertainties.  
They do not change your truth.  
My doubts cannot unseat your promises.  
You are a rock, O Christ,  
and your truth is a bulwark  
that I might dash myself against,  
until my strength is spent  
and I collapse at last in despair,  
only then to feel the tenderness of your embrace  
as you stoop to gather me to yourself,  
drawing me to your breast  
and cradling me there,  
where I find I am held again by a love  
that even my doubts  
cannot undo.

O Lord, how many times have you graciously led  
me through doubt into a deeper faith?  
Do so again, my Lord and my God!  
Even now. Do so again!

You alone are strong enough  
to carry the weight of my troubled thoughts,  
even as you alone are strong enough to bear  
the burden of my sin and my guilt and my  
shame, my wounds and my brokenness.

O Christ, let my doubts never compel me to  
hide my heart from you. Let them rather arise as  
questions to begin holy conversations.  
Invert these doubts, turning them to invitations  
to be present, to be honest, to seek you, to cry  
out to you, to bring my heart fully into the struggle  
rather than to seek to numb it.

Let my doubts become invitations to wrestle  
with you through such dark nights of the soul—  
as Jacob wrestled with the Angel—until the day  
breaks anew and I am fresh wounded by your  
love and resting in the blessing of peace again in  
your presence.

Now O Lord may the end result of my doubt  
be a more precious and hard-wrung faith,  
resilient as the Methuselah tree,  
and a hope more present and evergreen,  
and a more tender and active mercy  
extended to others in their own seasons  
of doubting.

So help me, my Lord and my God.  
I have no consolation but you.  
Meet me now in this eclipse-shadow  
of my doubt. Lead me again into your light.

Amen.

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## WEEK THREE

# Conflicting Passions

After returning from Egypt, Abram and Lot find themselves in a precarious situation. Both men were wealthy and both men had great flocks and possessions. As they worked on living together in the land, Abram's men and Lot's men continued to step on each other's toes because they were outgrowing the space that they inhabited. So the cautionary tale begins as Abram and Lot look across the land and decide where to settle. We see a distinct difference in their values, which causes calamity.

Lot looks at the land near Sodom and sees that it is rich and verdant and decides to move close to danger despite the risk because the land is so lush. Abram takes and moves to a separate part of the country and immediately builds an altar to the Lord.

"THE LORD SAID TO ABRAM, AFTER LOT HAD SEPARATED FROM HIM, "LIFT UP YOUR EYES AND LOOK FROM THE PLACE WHERE YOU ARE, NORTHWARD AND SOUTHWARD AND EASTWARD AND WESTWARD, FOR ALL THE LAND THAT YOU SEE I WILL GIVE TO YOU AND TO YOUR OFFSPRING FOREVER. I WILL MAKE YOUR OFFSPRING AS THE DUST OF THE EARTH, SO THAT IF ONE CAN COUNT THE DUST OF THE EARTH, YOUR OFFSPRING ALSO CAN BE COUNTED. ARISE, WALK THROUGH THE LENGTH AND THE BREADTH OF THE LAND, FOR I WILL GIVE IT TO YOU." SO ABRAM MOVED HIS TENT AND CAME AND SETTLED BY THE OAKS OF MAMRE, WHICH ARE AT HEBRON, AND THERE HE BUILT AN ALTAR TO THE LORD." GENESIS 13:14-18

As war starts to break out in the land, Lot is captured by the wicked kings due to his proximity to Sodom, and Abram is forced to take up arms to rescue Him. This week, we'll spend time looking more in depth at this story and working to find God's lessons for His people through telling this story. We have a lot to learn from each of the men in this story.

## A Prayer...

GRACIOUS FATHER,

YOU HAVE GIVEN US YOUR WORD AS A GUIDE AND YOUR HOLY SPIRIT TO EMPOWER US. YOU HAVE CALLED US YOUR OWN AND GIVEN US YOUR WISDOM AND STRENGTH TO LIVE THIS LIFE. HELP US TO LIVE IN A WAY THAT IS HOLY AND PLEASING TO YOU. I PRAY THAT YOU WOULD DRAW MY HEART AND ATTENTION TO YOU, POURING OUT MYSELF AS AN OFFERING, RATHER THAN SEEKING THE THINGS THAT ARE ALLURING AND SHINY. I PRAY THAT YOU WOULD POUR OUT YOUR WISDOM OVER ME AND PROVIDE THE RIGHT PATH TO BRING YOU GLORY AND WALK IN YOUR WAYS. I PRAISE YOU, FATHER, FOR YOUR LOVE AND KINDNESS. MAY I FOLLOW YOU WITH MY LIFE.

AMEN.

## Digging into God's Word

*As you spend time in God's word this week, use the following prompts to study. Spend your time walking through Genesis 13-14:16:*

**SINS TO AVOID** - Make a list of any sins, wrong actions, or attitudes mentioned in this passage. How can you avoid these areas in your life?

**PROMISES TO CLAIM** - Make a list of any promises - either stated or inferred in this passage. Which of these promises can you claim this week?

**EXAMPLES TO FOLLOW** - What examples do you see in this passage? Is there an example you should take to heart and use in your own life? Write it down.

**COMMANDS TO OBEY** - Write out any commands that you find in your reading. If the passage encourages you to take a specific action, view that as a command.

**KNOWLEDGE OF GOD TO APPLY** - What does the passage tell you about God that you can apply to your daily life? God's character shines through these passages as an example for you.

## WEEK FOUR

# The King who was Priest

*“And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) And he blessed him and said,*

*“Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!”*

*Genesis 14:18-20*

As we continue our study, we are faced with a portion of scripture that might feel a little bit obscure and out of place. We encounter a king who is also a priest named Melchizedek. He comes to Abram from Salem to bless him after his war with the kings earlier in the chapter.

There has been a lot of conjecture about who Melchizedek was and where he came from, but through this story we see some important aspects of God's character. The text tells us that he was a king and priest of God Most High - *El Elyon*. He gives Abram bread and wine, foreshadowing the last supper. He also intends to bless Abram with the plunder from the war, but Abram pays a tithe of his own resources to the priest.

We then see a unique interchange - Abram refuses the plunder because he doesn't want any man to be able to say that they made Abram rich. This might feel like an interesting choice in our modern context, but Abram was essentially saying that only God could supply his needs and desires. Throughout this week, take time to dig into the passage and use some Bible study tools to understand the story a little more.

## A Prayer...

JESUS,

WE ARE SHOWN IN HEBREWS THAT YOU ARE OUR KING AND OUR HIGH PRIEST WHO INTERCEDES ON OUR BEHALF. THANK YOU FOR COMING TO THE EARTH, FOR LIVING A PERFECT LIFE, FOR HEALING AND DECLARING THE TRUTH OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. THANK YOU FOR DYING THE DEATH THAT I DESERVE SO THAT I CAN HAVE A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER. THANK YOU FOR RISING AGAIN TO DEFEAT DEATH, HELL, AND THE GRAVE. THANK YOU FOR SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER AND PRAYING OVER ME. THANK YOU FOR COMING AGAIN IN TIME TO SET ALL THINGS RIGHT IN THE WORLD. YOU ARE MY KING, HIGH PRIEST, SAVIOR, MESSIAH. I BLESS YOUR NAME.

AMEN.

## Digging into God's Word

*Use the following framework to study Genesis 14:17-24 this week:*

**OBSERVATION** - Write down all of the facts found in this passage. You should be able to write down several observations. Start with simple thoughts and then write down bigger and more broad observations about the passage.

**PRINCIPLES** - Next, draw out some principles from the observations that you made. What is God teaching His people through this passage? What are guiding principles that God might want to teach readers as they take in the words of this passage? What is God trying to teach you? Consider using Blue Letter Bible to look at commentaries and concordances to help you understand what God is sharing.

**APPLICATION** - How will you apply these principles to your life? Be as specific as you can. What will you do today to make these principles and lessons stick?

# A Liturgy for Stargazing

**LEADER:** O Great Architect  
of These Intricate Heavens,

We have assembled under open skies this night  
to ponder your handiwork, to be moved to wonder at the poetry of your  
thoughts revealed in endless patterns of light.

How limitless the creative power of the One  
who first scattered these starfields  
as a sower flinging bright seeds.

**PEOPLE:** **How fathomless the thoughts of  
the One who named and remembers each burning star,  
and who also names and remembers each of us.**

Now you, his people, lift your eyes to the  
heavens, and consider his handiworks.

SILENCE IS KEPT, AS NIGHT SKIES ARE PONDERED.

Constellations rise and descend the staircase  
of the night at your command, O Lord.  
Galaxies spin like dancers. Space and time  
bend and bow to the gravity of your great will.

**In such holy wonders,  
baptize our imaginations,  
that we might ever be  
a people shaped by awe  
at your eternal power,  
and a people moved to worship  
by revelations of your divine nature.**

Awaken our hearts now to beat  
in rhythm to the dance of your creation.  
Tune our ears to hear the songs  
of stars in their trillion-fold choruses,  
bearing witness to your glory, your power.

**Use these bright expressions  
of your extravagant beauty**

**to stoke our holy longings,  
whetting our appetites afresh  
for all that is eternal and good.**

You made this vastness, and by  
your love you placed us in it,  
fixed amongst the wonders.

**So let us be stirred, O Lord,  
by night skies such as these,  
lifting our thoughts to you,  
our Maker, and to the vast  
and beautiful infinitude  
of your designs.**

O Spirit of God, draw praise from us,  
here in this cathedral of creation,  
beneath this starry dome.

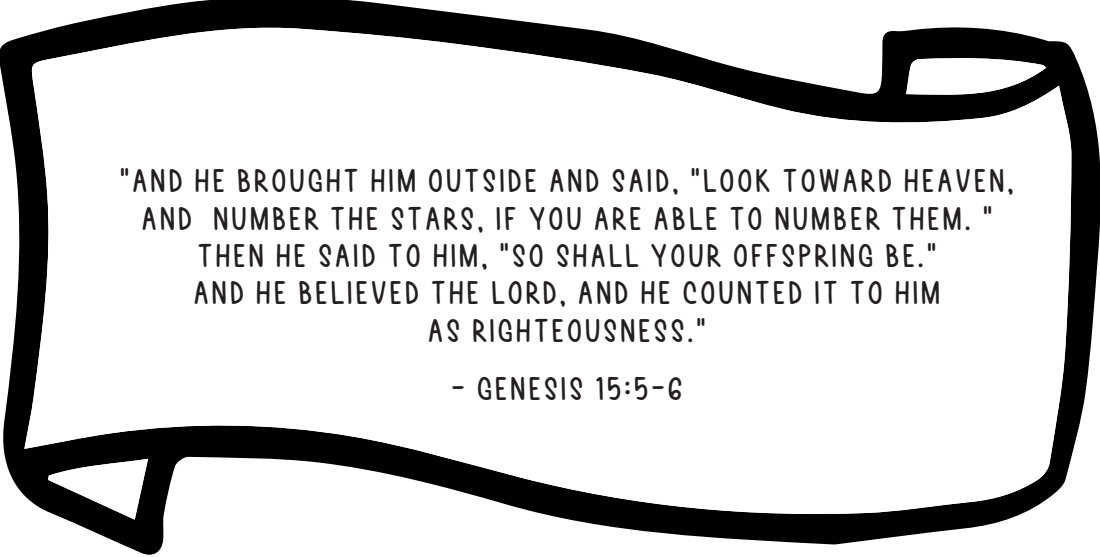
**Awaken our adoration in this place  
where we are so very small—  
and yet so greatly loved.**

**Amen.**

THE HEAVENS DECLARE  
THE GLORY OF GOD,  
AND THE SKY ABOVE  
PROCLAIMS HIS  
HANDIWORK.  
DAY TO DAY  
POURS OUT SPEECH,  
AND NIGHT TO NIGHT  
REVEALS KNOWLEDGE.  
THERE IS NO SPEECH, NOR  
ARE THERE WORDS,  
WHOSE VOICE IS  
NOT HEARD.  
THEIR VOICE GOES OUT  
THROUGH ALL THE EARTH,  
AND THEIR WORDS TO THE  
END OF THE WORLD.  
IN THEM HE HAS SET A  
TENT FOR THE SUN  
PSALM 19:1-4

WEEK FIVE

## Doubt Confronted



"AND HE BROUGHT HIM OUTSIDE AND SAID, "LOOK TOWARD HEAVEN,  
AND NUMBER THE STARS, IF YOU ARE ABLE TO NUMBER THEM. "  
THEN HE SAID TO HIM, "SO SHALL YOUR OFFSPRING BE."  
AND HE BELIEVED THE LORD, AND HE COUNTED IT TO HIM  
AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."

- GENESIS 15:5-6

Genesis 15 is one of the most beautiful and important passages of scripture in the Bible. In this chapter, we see a God who makes and fulfills covenants. Even as Abram is childless and doubting, God assures him that He will fulfill His promises to Abram.

After this, God commanded Abram to bring animals as a sacrifice and to lay them in a particular order. When this had been done, Abram falls into a deep sleep and God completed the ritual of the covenant both for Himself and for Abram. This moment is so significant because even when we fail in our covenants, God will always be faithful. Take some time this week to dig into scripture and research the different covenants that God entered into, and how He fulfilled them in the lives of His people.

### A Prayer...

HEAVENLY FATHER,

YOU ARE THE GOD WHO LOVES AND PURSUES. YOU HAVE PROMISED YOUR BLESSINGS AND KINDNESS IN MY LIFE AND I HAVE SEEN THEM POUR OUT OVER AND OVER. I PRAY THAT YOU WOULD REMIND ME OF YOUR PROMISES WHEN I FEEL WEAK, REMIND ME OF YOUR FAITHFULNESS WHEN I FEEL LOST, REMIND ME OF YOUR SON'S DEATH WHEN I FEEL UNCERTAIN. LORD, WOULD YOU GIVE ME YOUR CONFIDENCE AND STRENGTH? WOULD YOU FILL ME WITH HOPE? WOULD YOU REMIND ME THAT YOU LOVE ME DESPERATELY AND FULLY? THANK YOU FOR CONSTANTLY LOVING ME AND GIVING ME THE GOOD GIFTS OF YOUR SALVATION. I LOVE YOU.

AMEN.



## Digging into God's Word

*This week, spend time each day reading through all of Genesis 15 and use the method below to unpack God's word:*

**HONOR** - Before you open the Bible, honor God! Give Him praise for who He is and that He would provide His words for us to study. Thank Him for how he is moving in your life and for His truth.

**OBSERVE** - Read the scripture several times. Make some observations. What is the scripture presenting? Observe the nuances of the words and what they are speaking to your heart.

**PRAY** - Ask the Lord to show you His hand and His heart in the words that you are reading. Do as much as possible to approach the scripture from a place of openness to the Holy Spirit in humble submission to what God would teach you about what you just read.

**ENGAGE** - Take time to journal about how you might engage these scriptures throughout the week. What are some practical applications that you might use to put these truths into practice? Think about the people around you. Who could benefit from hearing the truth that you've read today?

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# FOUNDATIONAL COVENANTS

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A covenant is an agreement between two living persons as to what shall be done by them while living. God is the ultimate covenant maker – He initiates a binding, living relationship with mankind that is everlasting and will never fail.

God uses covenants as the unifying thread of His saving grace, flowing together to create one redemptive history of mankind and its relationship to and with God. While each covenant is specific to the person(s) in history with which it is established, they also build upon one another to create the full redemptive arc of God's plan to restore mankind to Himself.

In Genesis 1-11, we see God establish a perfect creation which is unified with Him, followed by man's increasing alienation of that perfect unity. Then, in Genesis 12-50, God establishes the building blocks for the entire salvation history.

## Adamic Covenant

GENESIS 1, 3 | GOD CREATES

God creates humanity to partner with Him in spreading Eden to the whole world. Even though man turns from God in the ultimate act of disobedience, God declares His intention to redeem mankind back to himself through the seed of Eve.

*See also: Romans 5:12-21; 1 John 3:8-9*

# Noahic Covenant

GENESIS 9 | GOD PROMISES FAITHFULNESS

God resets and renews the blessings of creation amidst man's sin. He reaffirms His image in humanity and man's work to fill and subdue the earth. God promises the preservation of his relationship with man while providing for the restraint of and justice against evil. This covenant was unconditional and establishes God's follow-through and devotion to His creation.

*See also: Isaiah 54:7-10; Romans 8: 18-25*

# Abrahamic Covenant

GENESIS 12, 15, 17 | GOD PROMISES BLESSINGS

God establishes a lineage for the purpose of His actions and the promise for the redemption of mankind. Specific to Abraham, He promises land, descendants, and blessings, but then extends these to the earth through all generations. Through one man, the whole of mankind can and will be restored. This covenant was unconditional – though God asked Abraham to remain faithful to God, His blessings would be given regardless.

*See also: Romans 4:13-25; Galatians 3:6-9*

# Mosaic Covenant

EXODUS 19 | GOD COMMANDS OBEDIENCE

God establishes His way as the way of righteousness and goodness. He commands obedience as a means of distinguishing a people connected to Him through the covenant with Abraham from the surrounding nations. This covenant was conditional – His blessings and curses are based upon obedience.

*See also: Galatians 3:19-25*

# Davidic Covenant

2 SAM. 7, 1 COR. 17 | GOD PROMISES RESTORATION

God reaffirms the way back to full relationship with Him for eternity. This covenant reaffirms the earlier covenants while establishing the specific path forward will be realized through David.

*See also: Isaiah 55:3-11; Jeremiah 33:14-26*

# New Covenant

JER. 31, LUKE 22 | GOD PROVIDES REDEMPTION

God turns His promises into provisions. He brings about the fulfillment of His commitment to relationship with man and demonstrates fully that it is not based on anything we can do. Jesus is fully perfect in every way the previous generations had failed to live up to their obedience to God. He is the savior of the whole world, fully righteous, the leader out of bondage, perfectly obedient to the Law, and establishes God's kingdom for eternity.

*See also: Ezekiel 36:26-27; John 3:16-21;  
Galatians 3:25-29; Hebrews 12:24*

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Many of the promises given by God within the covenants were not realized during the lifetime of the people with whom they were made (see Hebrews 11:39). In fact, there is often a purposeful delay in the fulfillment of God's promises or actions with the Patriarchs which requires immense obedience and faith in God. Scholars estimate it would have taken 50-75 years for Noah to build the Ark. God promised to make Abram into a great nation when he was 75 years old, but Isaac was not born for another 25 years. David died long before his promised descendent was born.

Delays often resulted in man's disobedience and lack of faith in God's authority and faithfulness. This is not to imply passivity in faith, but actions must be in line with trust and obedience in God's promise and knowing that He is in control. For example, Abraham and Sarah's original lack of faith resulted in a broken household, jealousy, and discord (a repetition of Adam and Eve's original disobedience). Later, we see Abraham has turned his trust back to God, even though he still hasn't seen the promise fulfilled. His hospitality to the three visitors is a stark contrast to Lot's corrupted version of hospitality and is followed immediately by his intercession on behalf of people of Sodom. God doesn't grant Abraham's request because the argument convinced him to change his mind; rather, Abraham's heart was in tune to God's desire for grace and mercy.

The covenants, and faith in their fulfillment, are part of a larger covenant canonical framework and structure which resulted in the ultimate covenant fulfillment of God with all people in the form of redemption and salvation through Christ.

Through the covenants, God binds himself to us and binds us to Him alone. He gives us his most precious possession, himself, to be our most precious possession.

*"Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God." - Rev 21:3*

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*Written by Amanda Riddle*

## The God who Sees

As we continue to journey with Abram and Sarai, we see another moment of wandering from God's plan in Genesis 16. We've already seen that Abram was worried about God fulfilling His promise because he didn't have a son. God then doubled down and promised that His descendants would be numerous and inhabit the land. In Genesis 16, we see Abram and Sarai take matters into their own hands by seeking to have a child with Hagar instead of waiting for the Lord's provision.

*"And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and*

*gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress." Genesis 16:2-4*

We then see Sarai deal harshly when Hagar conceives, even though it was through her own doing. In the midst of this, the son that is born is named Ishmael, but He is not the chosen one that God intends to use for His plans for the nation of Israel to come about. This sews more chaos into the world. While God is the God of forgiveness, we are not always saved from the consequences of our actions. We'll spend some time reading through Genesis 16 this week as we seek to learn what God might have for us.



### A Prayer...

FATHER,

FORGIVE ME FOR THE TIMES THAT I HAVE ASSUMED THAT YOU NEEDED MY HELP TO FULFILL YOUR PROMISES. HELP ME TO WAIT WITHOUT IMPATIENCE. TO TRUST IN YOUR PROCESS. TO SEE YOU IN THE DETAILS. EVEN WHEN I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE DOING OR YOUR TIMING IN THINGS, MAY I NOT PRETEND TO BE YOU. I PRAY THAT IN PATIENCE, I MIGHT SEE YOUR MIGHTY HAND, STRETCHED OUT TO PROVIDE ALL THAT I NEED. I ASK THAT YOU RECEIVE HONOR THROUGH MY WAITING SO THAT YOU MIGHT BE SEEN FOR WHO YOU ARE - EL ROI - THE GOD WHO SEES.

AMEN.

## Spending Time in God's Word

*This week, tackle Genesis 16 and use the following framework to learn from what you are reading:*

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**READING** - Begin with reading through the passage 2-3 times and really seek to understand the individual words, phrases, and thoughts that make up the passage. Take time to journal any specifics that stand out to you. Don't try to add your own meaning, but read the text as it comes off of the page. The goal is not to see the words with your eyes, but to feel them in your heart, mind, and soul.

**MEDITATION** - This step has everything to do with thinking of specific chunks of the passage in front of you. Think about phrases and specific words that stood out to you. Focus intently on why the Holy Spirit might have chosen these words to speak to you today. Reflect on how it might apply to your life. Is it relevant to something that you are going through? Does it bring to mind a struggle you have been dealing with? Journal some thoughts that followed your meditation time.

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**PRAYER** - Our next step is to take all of the words, thoughts, feelings, actions, fears, and convictions that we've just experienced and offer them to the Lord in prayer. Ask Him to illuminate what He would have you do with them. Simply talk to God and tell Him how you are feeling. Confess any anxieties, praise Him for who He is, ask Him for what you need. Take time to record your prayers in a prayer journal.

**CONTEMPLATION** - Be silent in the presence of the Lord. Relax, Embrace, and just Be with the Lord. Don't rush this. Quiet your mind and soul and sit patiently with Him. Take time after contemplation to write down your experience with God in silence.

# NAMES OF GOD



Words and titles are used to describe people on earth. We use these things to communicate what we think is true of them. These are our perceptions which are not always accurate. Just because someone is called “good” or “strong” doesn’t necessarily make it true. But when we think of the names of God, we are not using these names to describe what we think he is like. We are echoing these names back to a God that uses them for Himself; a God that spoke everything into being. He has DEFINED what these words mean by His very existence.

Take time to meditate on these names of God.

What name do you know Him most comfortably by?

What name of God do you want to know and experience more deeply?

Invite the Holy Spirit to help you know God more intimately.



**EL ELYON**

GOD MOST HIGH

Genesis 14:18-22

**Jehovah  
Magen**

YOU ARE MY SHIELD

Genesis 15:1

**EL ROI**

THE GOD WHO SEES

Genesis 16:13

**EL Shaddai**

LORD ALMIGHTY

Genesis 17:1

## WEEK SEVEN

# Name Change

As Ishmael grew, Abram still awaited the birth of his promised son. God continued to remind him that faithfulness leads to His long awaited promise. God appeared to Abram and not only changed his and Sarai's name, but He made good on His promise to deliver the long awaited son.

We see God is the God of covenants who keeps His promises. Even when the circumstances seem ridiculous - being 100 years old, God still provided the son that He had promised. Abraham was faithful to follow God in what He had called Him to do in the covenant and God honored His faithfulness. We'll spend time this week digging into this part of the text. Let's see what messages God has for us in His word.

"WHEN ABRAM WAS NINETY-NINE YEARS OLD THE LORD APPEARED TO ABRAM AND SAID TO HIM, "I AM GOD ALMIGHTY; WALK BEFORE ME, AND BE BLAMELESS, THAT I MAY MAKE MY COVENANT BETWEEN ME AND YOU, AND MAY MULTIPLY YOU GREATLY." THEN ABRAM FELL ON HIS FACE. AND GOD SAID TO HIM, "BEHOLD, MY COVENANT IS WITH YOU, AND YOU SHALL BE THE FATHER OF A MULTITUDE OF NATIONS. NO LONGER SHALL YOUR NAME BE CALLED ABRAM, BUT YOUR NAME SHALL BE ABRAHAM, FOR I HAVE MADE YOU THE FATHER OF A MULTITUDE OF NATIONS."

GENESIS 17:1-5

"AND GOD SAID TO ABRAHAM, "AS FOR SARAI YOUR WIFE, YOU SHALL NOT CALL HER NAME SARAI, BUT SARAH SHALL BE HER NAME. I WILL BLESS HER, AND MOREOVER, I WILL GIVE YOU A SON BY HER. I WILL BLESS HER, AND SHE SHALL BECOME NATIONS; KINGS OF PEOPLES SHALL COME FROM HER."

GENESIS 17:15-16

## A Prayer...

HEAVENLY FATHER,

I ASK THAT YOU WOULD OPEN YOUR WORD TO ME. THAT I MIGHT HEAR YOUR VOICE AND SEE YOUR HEART IN THE WORDS OF THE BIBLE. WOULD YOU TEACH ME YOUR PRINCIPLES AND WOULD YOU HELP THEM TO CLING TO MY HEART AND MIND SO THAT I MIGHT TRUST IN YOUR FAITHFULNESS? I PRAY THAT THE EXAMPLES OF THE HEROES OF THE FAITH, SUCH AS ABRAHAM, WOULD HELP TO DIRECT MY PATH AND PROVIDE BOTH WISDOM AND CAUTION AS I SEEK TO SERVE YOU MORE DEEPLY. I'M THANKFUL FOR ALL THAT YOU HAVE GIVEN TO ME AND PROVIDED TO ME. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PROVISION AND LOVE.

AMEN.

## Digging into God's Word

*As you read Genesis 17-18:15, use the following method to study God's word:*

**PURPOSE** - Why do you think this passage was written? Why is it important enough to be in the Bible? What do you think the overall theme or topic is?

**PRIMARY VERSE** - Which verse seems to be the most important thought in this passage? Why? Take time to write out the entire verse and the reference.

**PROMISES** - Make a list of the promises you find in the passage. How do these apply to your life?

**PROBLEMS** - Is there anything that didn't make sense in the verses you read? Any words, thoughts, or concepts you have trouble wrapping your brain around? Take time to look up the answers - you could use some of the resources provided on the resource page.

**PRACTICAL APPLICATION** - What does this passage mean to you? What actions should you take based on the reading and journaling you did this week? What are your next steps today?

# GENEALOGY OF JESUS



## ABRAHAM

At 75, Abraham (then known as Abram) was living in Haran when God called Abram to leave.

Abraham, accompanied by his wife Sarah and his nephew Lot, journeyed towards the land of Canaan

One of the central promises made to Abraham was that he would become the father of many nations.

God pledged to give Abraham and his descendants a land of their own. This land, known as the Promised Land, would become the inheritance of the Israelites.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is referred to as a descendant of Abraham, emphasizing the fulfillment of the covenant's promise to bless all nations through Abraham's lineage.

Adam  
Seth  
Enosh  
Kenan  
Mahalalel  
Jared  
Enoch  
Methuselah  
Lamech  
Noah  
Shem  
Arpachshad  
Shelah  
Eber  
Peleg  
Reu  
Serug  
Nahor  
Terah  
**Abraham**  
Isaac  
Jacob  
Judah  
Perez  
Hezron  
Ram  
Amminadab  
Nahshon

Salmon, wife Rahab  
Boaz, wife Ruth  
Obed  
Jesse  
King David, wife Bathsheba

### LINE OF JOSEPH

Solomon	Amon
Rehoboam	Josiah
Abijah	Jehoiakim
Asa	Jeconiah
Jehoshaphat	Shealtiel
Joram	Zerubbabel
Ahaziah	Abide
Joash	Eliakim
Amaziah	Azor
Uzziah	Sad
Jotham	Achim
Ahaz	Eliud
Hezekiah	Eleazar
Manasseh	Matthan
	Jacob
	Joseph

### LINE OF MARY

Nathan	Addi
Mattatha	Melchi
Menna	Neri
Melia	Shealtiel
Eliakim	Zerubbabel
Jonam	Rhesa
Joseph	Joanan
Judah	Joda
Simeon	Joseph
Levi	Semein
Matthat	Mattathias
Jorim	Math
Eliezer	Naggai
Joshua	Hesli
Er	Nahum
Elmadam	Amos
Cosam	Mattathias
	Joseph
	Jannai
	Melchi
	Levi
	Matthat
	Eli
	Mary

**JESUS**

WEEK EIGHT

## God's Judgment

"SO THE MEN TURNED FROM THERE AND WENT TOWARD SODOM, BUT ABRAHAM STILL STOOD BEFORE THE LORD. THEN ABRAHAM DREW NEAR AND SAID, "WILL YOU INDEED SWEEP AWAY THE RIGHTEOUS WITH THE WICKED? SUPPOSE THERE ARE FIFTY RIGHTEOUS WITHIN THE CITY. WILL YOU THEN SWEEP AWAY THE PLACE AND NOT SPARE IT FOR THE FIFTY RIGHTEOUS WHO ARE IN IT? FAR BE IT FROM YOU TO DO SUCH A THING, TO PUT THE RIGHTEOUS TO DEATH WITH THE WICKED, SO THAT THE RIGHTEOUS FARE AS THE WICKED! FAR BE THAT FROM YOU! SHALL NOT THE JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH DO WHAT IS JUST?" AND THE LORD SAID, "IF I FIND AT SODOM FIFTY RIGHTEOUS IN THE CITY, I WILL SPARE THE WHOLE PLACE FOR THEIR SAKE."

GENESIS 18:22-26

The last half of Genesis 18 and the first half of 19 set the stage for God's judgment over Sodom for the wickedness of the city. We see His righteous anger pour out and Abraham pleads for the lives of those who are righteous within the city, also knowing that Lot and his family are there.

Abraham continues to barter with God to the point that God was willing to save the city for ten righteous people. The rest of the preparation for destruction was intense. We'll let you dig in this week and see the purposes for God feeling righteous anger and we'll pick up later to see how God finally reacts to the inhabitants of Sodom.

### A Prayer...

HOLY GOD,

YOU ARE FULLY JUST AND FULL OF MERCY. AS I CONSIDER MY SIN, I AM SO THANKFUL FOR YOUR FORGIVENESS AND PASSION FOR THE PEOPLE THAT YOU HAVE CALLED YOUR OWN. FORGIVE ME FOR THE TIMES THAT I FALL SHORT OF YOUR STANDARD AND FALL INTO SINFUL DESIRES OR PATTERNS. I PRAY THAT YOU WOULD WASH ME WHITE AS SNOW IN THE BLOOD OF JESUS. I PRAY THAT YOU WOULD CONTINUE TO GUARD MY HEART AND MIND AND MAKE IT MORE LIKE YOU. I PRAY THAT YOU WOULD DECREASE MY DESIRE FOR SINFUL ACTIONS AND INCREASE MY DESIRE FOR YOUR PRESENCE AND EXPERIENCE YOU FOR WHO YOU ARE.

AMEN.

## Digging into God's Word

*This week, read through Genesis 18:16-19:29 and use the following methods to study God's word:*

**SINS TO AVOID** - Make a list of any sins, wrong actions, or attitudes mentioned in this passage. How can you avoid these areas in your life?

**PROMISES TO CLAIM** - Make a list of any promises - either stated or inferred in this passage. Which of these promises can you claim this week?

**EXAMPLES TO FOLLOW** - What examples do you see in this passage? Is there an example you should take to heart and use in your own life? Write it down.

**COMMANDS TO OBEY** - Write out any commands that you find in your reading. If the passage encourages you to take a specific action, view that as a command.

**KNOWLEDGE OF GOD TO APPLY** - What does the passage tell you about God that you can apply to your daily life? God's character shines through these passages as an example for you.

WEEK NINE

## God's Grace

In the climax of the story of Sodom, we finally see God's judgment and His grace in equal measure. Lot's family is rescued, but the city of Sodom is decimated. This points to a God who does not let evil abide, but chooses to provide grace through both His judgment and His mercy.

Let us look towards God who deals with sin through both compassion and judgment. This should cause our hearts to pour out in confession and ask for forgiveness. When we do, He is faithful and just and will forgive us of our sins.

"THE SUN HAD RISEN ON THE EARTH WHEN LOT CAME TO ZOAR. THEN THE LORD RAINED ON SODOM AND GOMORRAH SULFUR AND FIRE FROM THE LORD OUT OF HEAVEN. AND HE OVERTHREW THOSE CITIES, AND ALL THE VALLEY, AND ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE CITIES, AND WHAT GREW ON THE GROUND. BUT LOT'S WIFE, BEHIND HIM, LOOKED BACK, AND SHE BECAME A PILLAR OF SALT.

AND ABRAHAM WENT EARLY IN THE MORNING TO THE PLACE WHERE HE HAD STOOD BEFORE THE LORD. AND HE LOOKED DOWN TOWARD SODOM AND GOMORRAH AND TOWARD ALL THE LAND OF THE VALLEY, AND HE LOOKED AND, BEHOLD, THE SMOKE OF THE LAND WENT UP LIKE THE SMOKE OF A FURNACE.

SO IT WAS THAT, WHEN GOD DESTROYED THE CITIES OF THE VALLEY, GOD REMEMBERED ABRAHAM AND SENT LOT OUT OF THE MIDST OF THE OVERTHROW WHEN HE OVERTHREW THE CITIES IN WHICH LOT HAD LIVED."

GENESIS 19:23-29





## Digging into God's Word

*As you spend time in Genesis 19:30-20:18 this week, use this method for understanding God's word:*

**PREPARE** - Put away distractions and ask God to prepare your heart for your reading and journaling time.

**LEARN** - What does this passage have to teach me today? Write down lessons that characters learned or principles that are present that you can glean from this passage.

**ASK QUESTIONS** - What don't you understand about the passage? Take time to write down these questions. What could be illuminated through further study? What principles should you discuss with those around you?

**NAME TRUTH** - What are some of the nuggets of truth from this passage that you can learn from? What truths do you need to take away and put into practice?

**TAKE ACTION** - What will you do with what you've read? How can you put the lessons and truth into action this week? Write out your steps and follow them!

## A Prayer...

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HOLY GOD,

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GRACE AND YOUR MERCY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SON, JESUS, WHO DIED SO THAT I COULD HAVE NEW LIFE AND ENTER INTO A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU. I PRAY THAT MY HEART WOULD BE EVER DRAWN TOWARDS YOU AND AWAY FROM MY SINFUL NATURE. WOULD YOU SHOW ME THE GIFTS OF YOUR SALVATION FRESH AND NEW TODAY. I LOVE YOU AND I'M THANKFUL FOR YOUR GRACE.

AMEN.



## COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS

### WEEK ONE

#### BELONG

Play a round of the “I’m Going on a Trip” game. The first person begins by saying, “I’m going on a trip, and I’m bringing...” followed by an item that starts with the letter ‘A,’ for example, an apple. The next person repeats “I’m going on a trip and I’m bringing an apple, and ...” and adds an item starting with ‘B’, for example “... and a bow.” Continue the pattern around the group, each repeating the former items and adding an item starting with the next letter of the alphabet. See how long you can keep going.

#### GROW

*In Genesis, 12:1-3*, what is Abram called to do? By Whom is he called? What is Abram promised in return for his obedience? Who and what did he have to leave behind? Who does he need to trust to do so? Would you find it easy to obey this calling? Have you found it easy to obey your own calling(s)? Why or not? What have you received in return for your obedience?

*Looking at Genesis 12:1-3*, how many times are the words “bless” and “blessing” used? What does Abram need to do to receive that blessing? What will happen to other people and nations depending on how Abram is treated?

*Read Genesis 12:1-3, Matthew 1:17, and Galatians 3:29.* How will the lives of Abraham’s descendants be affected by Abraham’s obedience? In what way(s) does the Bible hinge on this verse? Of Abraham’s descendants, who is the most important to us as believers?

*Compare Genesis 2:16-17, 12:1-3, and Galatians 3:8-9.* In what way is Genesis 12:1-3 a one-sided covenant? What or who is given as collateral? How does this differ from the covenant in Genesis 2:16-17? How does this foreshadow what Christ has done for His believers?

*Compare Genesis 12:2 to Genesis 11:4.* Which words are similar or the same in these two verses? Why was Abram to be blessed, while the actions of the tower builders resulted in punishment? Tell about a time when your motivation resulted in either reward or punishment.

#### GOING DEEPER

*Use Genesis 12:1-3 and Galatians 3:8-9 and 29 and the article “What is replacement theology/supersessionism/fulfillment theology” at [www.gotquestions.org/replacement-theology.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/replacement-theology.html) to answer the following:*

- What is Abraham’s role in this covenant? Who is blessed by this covenant?
- What role does the believer in Christ take in receiving this blessing?
- In what way does this foreshadow our role in accepting Christ?
- Does the Abrahamic covenant remain in effect for the Jewish people?
- What scholarly arguments have been proposed regarding this?
- Which of these arguments do you believe? Why?
- How might this affect your witness to Jewish people?
- As believers in Christ, what role are we to take in extending this blessing to others?

## BELONG

Describe a time when you did something that felt like a big risk.

## GROW

What promises had God made to Abram in Genesis 12:1-4? From Gen. 20:4-13, what did Abram do that showed his faith in God's promises? What did he do that showed a lack of faith?

How did Abram's lack of faith impact those around him?

In what ways do our lives reflect a mixture of faith and lack of faith?

How does God respond to believers who struggle to live by faith?

## REACH

Who do you know who needs their faith strengthened? How can you help them?

Where is God calling you to step out in faith?

## BELONG

Where do you feel most at peace? Do you have a favorite vacation spot where you like to go to temporarily escape from the fast pace of life? Are there certain people who bring you peace?

What do you typically do when you have a difficult decision to make? Is there someone you regularly go to for advice?

## GROW

In Genesis 13, Abram is at a bit of a crossroads both in regards to his relationship with his nephew Lot, and in his residency. Have a member of your group read verses 1-4, and discuss the importance of Abram returning to the first place where he had built an altar to the LORD. What does the altar represent or remind him of? How can we apply this principle to our own lives when we make mistakes or face challenges?

Next, have a member of your group read verses 5-9. What appears to be causing the conflict both between Abram and Lot and between their herdsman? With Abraham holding the patriarchal high ground, why do you think he allowed Lot to decide first what land he would take to possess?

In Genesis 13:10-12, Lot chooses the region of the Jordan, which was lush and well-watered. However, the promised land lay in the opposite direction. What does this reveal about Lot's faith? How often do we prioritize immediate comfort over God's promises?

We next read in verses 13-18 an early indicator of the challenges Lot and his family will face as well as the promises linked to Abram's faithfulness. Discuss as a group the implications and upcoming challenges of Lot's choice. Consider the faithfulness and kindness that God exhibits toward Abram in immediately affirming his approach and decision to settle in Canaan.

How can we follow Abram's example in our decision-making? When faced with choices, do we look to God or rely solely on our own understanding? How does Abram encourage us to trust God's plan and provision even when circumstances seem unclear? What promises has God made to us that we can hold onto during challenging times?

## REACH

Do we most often see people in our world make decisions like Lot did or like Abram?

Like Lot, have you ever been faced with a choice where you quickly chose what was best for you, leaving the rest for someone else? Why do we tend to do this, and how can we overcome it?

## BELONG

Watch this video “How Abraham and Melchizedek Point Forward to Jesus” from the Bible Project at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KlZjA-3hiys>



## GROW

Using a Bible Dictionary or study Bible, look up the name “Melchizedek.”

What does this name mean? Why is the meaning of this name significant?

Consider Genesis 12:2, 14:17-24 and Matthew 5:39 as you answer the following questions:

How did the king of Salem treat Abraham? How did the king of Sodom treat Abraham? How was the treatment of each king reflected in Abraham’s response to each? How do you respond to others in response to how you are treated? According to Matthew 5:39, as believers in Christ, how should we respond even when we are not shown respect or hospitality?

Why was Abraham not willing to accept booty from the king of Sodom? How does your life demonstrate what the Lord has done for you rather than pointing to your own accomplishments?

Was Abraham relying on military power to be made into a “great nation” as he was promised in Genesis 12:2? Upon who is Abraham relying to be made great nation? How is his reliance demonstrated in his response to each of the kings? When searching for significance, where do you put your reliance?

What name is used to refer to the Lord? Who uses this name? How does this name illustrate who He is to you?

## GOING DEEPER

Read Genesis 14:17-24, Psalm 110:4 and Hebrews 7 as well as the article from [gotquestions.org](https://www.gotquestions.org) “What is the order of Melchizedek?” at <https://www.gotquestions.org/order-of-Melchizedek.html> to answer the following questions:



Who was Melchizedek? In what way(s) is his identity mysterious?

What is the “order of Melchizedek?” Why is he considered a priest? How might he be considered a “type of Christ?” Who do you believe he was? Why?

How does Melchizedek point to humankind’s need for a Savior? How might these passages help you to direct nonbelievers to consider Christ?

## BELONG

What do you do when you face a problem that you simply don't know how to solve?

Waiting for something can sometimes make us feel or look foolish. What kinds of things do we try to manufacture in our lives when it isn't the right time?

## GROW

In Genesis 15, Abram knows the future that God promised to him, but is struggling to see past the immediate hurdles in his way. Like Abram or Sarai, have you ever tried to come up with a solution because it didn't seem like God was moving fast enough? How did that turn out?

Read Genesis 15:1-3. What do Abram's concerns about his lack of an heir reveal about his desires and fears?

In verses 4-7, God again assures Abram that He is in control, and that He is more than capable of fulfilling His promises. In today's context, how does God's promise of a multitude of descendants to Abram resonate? What is the large promise that we are waiting for as a church today?

Following God's reminder that He can be trusted, Abram believed God (as mentioned in verse 6), yet he still had a spirit of fear, asking God "How am I to know...?" How could Abraham have belief that was credited to him as righteousness, while still exhibiting fear? Do we ever exhibit this mix of faith and fear?

## REACH

Abram's question "How much longer?" is about knowledge and contentment. What is your current "how much longer" question, and how do you handle waiting?

How can Abram's story inspire us in times of doubt and uncertainty? Are there any people in your life who are waiting for the fulfillment of a promise? How can you encourage them this week?



## BELONG

Can you think of a time where you took matters into your own hands to make something happen? What was the result?

Have you ever waited for God for a long time for Him to do something in your life? How did it work out?

## GROW

Have everyone open their Bibles to Genesis 16. Take turns reading the passage as a group.

Think back through the whole story. What promises do we see that God has made either in these verses or prior?

As we look at this passage, what are the sins and discretions that happen? Why are these actions sinful?

What lessons can we learn from the way that Abram and Sarai handled this situation?

Take a look again at verses 9-14. What does this part of the passage tell us about God?

As we consider our growth for this week, what is the biggest takeaway that each of us will carry in our hearts?

## REACH

Spend some time sharing prayer requests and praying for each other.

Pick someone to help keep you accountable this week for the heart work that you are trusting God to work in your life.



## BELONG

If you had to describe your identity using only things you're interested in/hobbies how would you describe yourself?

How would other people describe you?

## GROW

As a group, open up the Bible to Genesis 17-18:15. Take turns reading through this passage.

What is the significance of the covenant that God makes with Abram?

Why do you think God used circumcision as a sign of the covenant?

What are some other ways that circumcision is mentioned in the Bible?

What is the significance of God changing Abram and Sarai's names? What does this new identity mean for them?

Why do you think the promise of God might have been hard to believe? Have you had a time where you felt like God's promise in your life might not come true?

## REACH

What practical steps can you take this week to get these principles into your heart?

Share prayer requests and pray together.

## BELONG

What's a pet peeve of yours that makes you frustrated? How do you respond?

Has anyone ever told you something you were doing that was a pet peeve of theirs? How did you respond?

## GROW

As a group, read Genesis 18:16-19:29.

Have someone go back and explain what is happening in this text.

What are some of the important lessons that we can learn from internalizing this text?

Why do you think that Abraham kept going back to God? Why do you think God responded the way that He did?

In the final events that led up to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, what seemed to be the final straw?

Do you find it shocking that God would respond the way He did? Why or why not?

## REACH

We are often thankful for God's forgiveness, but it can be hard to confess our sins. Why do you think this is?

Provide a space for confession in your group: Is there anything the Lord is prompting you to share with the group that has been on your heart? Areas of sin or areas of growth? Spend time in prayer together.

## BELONG

As you think about the different times that God has judged people and caused lots of death and destruction, how do you process that? How do we see God in the midst of chaos?

How can we see God as good even in the midst of these things?

## GROW

As a group, read through Genesis 19:30-20:18.  
Have someone summarize what you just read.

What are some of the sins that we see throughout this passage?

Why are these indiscretions important for us to see and how do we guard against them?

What are some of God's promises that we see throughout this passage? How do we look at these promises with hope in our hearts?

How do we internalize these lessons and grow this week?

## REACH

What have we learned from the journey of Abraham over the last several weeks? What are you hopeful for as we continue to learn about Abraham's descendants?

How can we pray for each other this week?

